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SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

NEIL GAIMAN

MARC HEMPEL

D'ISRAELI

THE SANDMAN™

THE KINDLY ONES

I THINK IT'S GOING TO BE BIGGER THAN I HAD PLANNED.

I DON'T MIND. AS BIG AS IT NEEDS TO BE.

YOU MAY WANT TO STAND BACK. THIS IS GOING TO BE HOT.

PROBABLY TIME TO HAUL THE BRAT IN, THEN...

≷ UHHHN...≷

IT'S *STUCK!*

WHAT IF HE'S ESCAPED?

WHAT? BUT...

HO HO *HOH!* JUST PULLING YOUR LEG. IT'S COMING FINE.

DON'T *DO* THAT.

AS IF HE *COULD* GET AWAY. OR EVER THE SILVER CORD BE LOOSED, WE'LL *BOTH* BE UP TO OUR NECKS IN SHIT, EH?

whoomph

I DID THAT ONCE. THEY MADE A *SAGA* ABOUT IT.

WHAT?

KEEP PULLING HIM IN, AND I'LL *TELL* YOU ABOUT IT. *TRUE* STORY.

MANY YEARS AGO I CONVINCED THOR OF THE AESIR THAT THE REASON FOR HIS IMPOTENCE WAS THAT HE WAS PREGNANT.

PREGNANT?

MM. HE'S NOT VERY BRIGHT.

AND I TOLD HIM TO LIE FACE DOWN AND NAKED ON HIS SLEEPING FURS UNTIL I CAME AND DELIVERED HIM OF CHILD.

HE LISTENED TO YOU?

I WAS DISGUISED AS A WANDERING PHYSICIAN. AND, AS I SAID, HE'S--

NOT VERY BRIGHT?

EXACTLY.

SO I FED HIM A GALLON OF CASTOR OIL, PAINTED HIS ARSE BLUE AND SHOVED A CORK IN HIS BUM-HOLE.

WHY?

BECAUSE IT AMUSED ME TO DO SO. I TOLD HIM IT WAS THE CURE FOR HIS CONDITION. THEN I WENT OFF TO SLEEP WITH HIS WIFE.

HOHOH!

SHE *WASN'T* MUCH OF A LAY. BUT IT AMUSED ME TO KNOW THAT IT WOULD DESTROY HIM IF EVER HE FOUND OUT.

SO THOR IS LYING FACE DOWN WITH A CORK UP HIS FUNDAMENT FOR A WEEK AND A DAY, WHILE HIS INSIDES CONTINUE TO RUMBLE THEIR COURSE.

AND *NOW* HE'S GOT A PAIN IN HIS GUT LIKE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE, AS THE PRESSURE CONTINUES TO BUILD...

I'D *TOLD* HIM HE MIGHT EXPERIENCE SOME PAIN. THAT IT WAS COMMON IN PREGNANCY.

SUDDENLY, INTO THE ROOM, THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW, BOUNDS *RATATOSK*, THE SQUIRREL WHO LIVES IN THE BRANCHES OF THE WORLD TREE.

RATATOSK IS CURIOUS AS ANY LITTLE SQUIRREL.

AND HE CLIMBS ON TOP OF THOR'S STRAINING, SQUIRMING BUTTOCKS, AND HE-- PULLS *OUT* THE CORK.

THRRRRRRRPPPPPP!

IT'S AN EXPLOSION-- EIGHT DAYS' WORTH OF OILED SHIT THUNDERS FORTH FROM THE FUNDAMENT OF THE LORD OF STORMS.

AND THE MIGHTY THOR SITS UP, AND LOOKS ROUND, AND SEES RATATOSK ON THE GROUND, STUNNED, GASSED, BEFOULED.

AND SLOWLY, WITH HANDS AS BIG AS HAM HOCKS, HE PICKS UP THE LITTLE ANIMAL, AND *STARES* AT IT.

AND THEN, WITH ONE PONDEROUS MOTION, HE *CLASPS* IT TO HIS BOSOM.

"YOU'RE UGLY," HE SAYS, "YOU'RE HAIRY, AND YOU'RE COVERED IN SHIT. BUT YOU'RE **MINE**, AND I **LOVE** YOU!"

EEEEEEHEEEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHHHEEE!
OHHH, THAT'S *RICH*, THAT IS...
"YOU'RE MINE AND I LOVE YOU."
HEEEEE!
THUP THUP THUP THUP
OOH...

UPS-A-DAISY. HERE HE COMES.
THERE YOU ARE, BOY. COME TO NUNCLE ROBIN.
WHAT'S HE GOT?
A FEATHER. LOOKS LIKE A PHOENIX'S.
THEY'RE *LUCKY*.
FOR WHOM?

GIVE HIM HERE.

THERE WE GO, DANNY-BOY. *WHAT* A LOVELY FEATHER WE'VE GOT.

YES, IT'S DEFINITELY FROM A PHOENIX.

See nibs.

NOW, YOUNG MAN-- ONTO THE NICE FIRE.

THE KINDLY ONES 3

WRITTEN BY
NEIL GAIMAN

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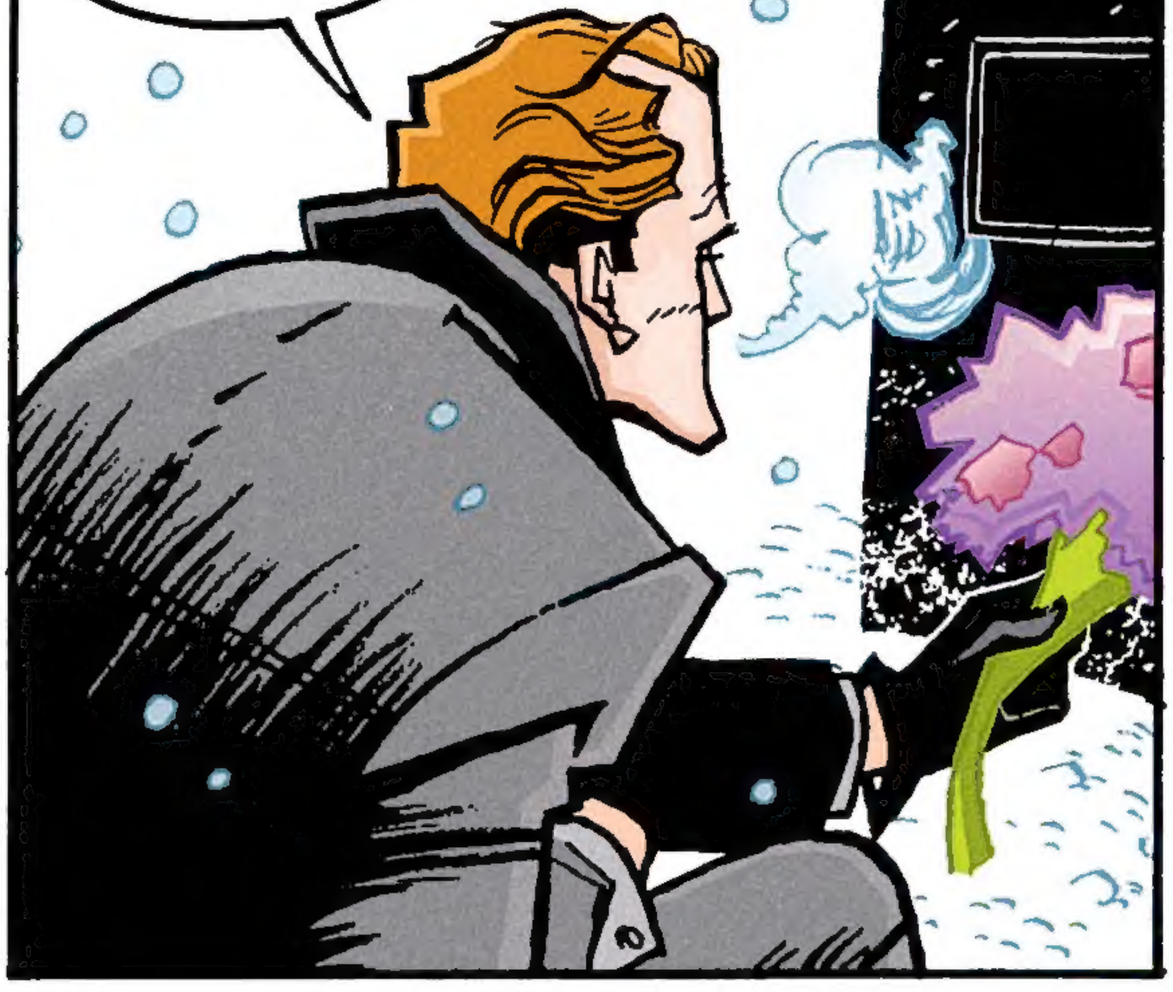

LET'S SEE. WHAT HAVE I GOT TO SAY?

WELL, *FIRST* OF ALL, I HOPE *THAT'LL* TEACH YOU TO LOOK BOTH WAYS BEFORE CROSSING THE STREET.

HAHHH...

OH *SHIT.*

I'M SORRY...

I *DO* THINK YOU'RE LISTENING TO ME, FROM SOMEWHERE.

I MEAN, I'VE SEEN TOO MUCH OVER THE YEARS TO BELIEVE THAT IT STARTS AND ENDS WITH BODIES.

THERE'S *SOMETHING* AROUND BEFORE BODIES START, SOMETHING AROUND *AFTER* THEY ROT.

BUGGERED IF I KNOW WHAT IT *IS*, THOUGH.

SOMEBODY ONCE TOLD ME YOU DON'T REALLY DIE UNTIL EVERYONE THAT YOU KNEW IS DEAD, TOO. THINK OF ALL THE PEOPLE I'M KEEPING ALIVE, EH?

:sigh:

I DON'T KNOW.

I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT YOU *SMELL* LIKE.

YOU'VE BEEN GONE TWO DAYS, AND I DON'T REMEMBER HOW YOU SMELLED. YOU DIDN'T SMELL LIKE ANYONE ELSE. I *LIKED* THE WAY YOU SMELLED.

I...

I MISS YOU A LOT.

BRRR.

LISTEN, AUDREY. THERE'S STUFF I NEVER TOLD YOU. I MEAN, THAT STUFF YOU WERE ASKING ME ABOUT. ABOUT MY FAMILY. ALL THAT STUFF.

I NEVER *WOULD* HAVE TOLD YOU, EITHER.

NOTHING PERSONAL.

IT'S JUST TOO EASY TO SEE MYSELF LOCKED AWAY WHILE A BUNCH OF NOBEL PRIZE WANNABES EXAMINE SLICES OF MY PANCREAS, AND TRY TO FIGURE OUT HOW I GOT TO BE SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS OLD.

OR SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE. I DON'T KNOW.

AND THE TROUBLE IS, THERE'S NOTHING TO FIND OUT.

YOU KNOW HOW I GOT TO BE MY AGE?

I HAVEN'T *DIED*, YET. THAT'S HOW.

I EVEN *TOLD* YOU HOW NOT TO DIE. YOU THOUGHT I WAS JOKING. THERE'S NEVER BEEN A WOMAN BELIEVED ME YET...

OR A MAN, FOR THAT MATTER.

CHRIST. I'VE SEEN *SO* MANY PEOPLE DIE.

EVERYONE'S DIED. EVERYONE I'VE LOVED. MY WIVES. MY LOVES. MY CHILDREN.

YOU KNOW, THERE'S SOMETHING IT TOOK ME A COUPLE OF CENTURIES TO FIGURE OUT. I MEAN, THERE WAS A WHILE WHEN I THOUGHT THAT LIFE WAS ALL ABOUT FIGHTING AND EATING AND SEX.

MAINLY SEX. IT WAS NEVER *THAT* HARD TO DIP YOUR WICK. I MEAN, UNLESS YOU'RE A LEPER YOU CAN GET A MAID TO BED YOU, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE AFTER.

BUT ONE DAY I REALIZED THAT IT WAS SORT OF EMPTY IF YOU WEREN'T WITH SOMEONE YOU WANTED TO SPEND SOME TIME WITH.

IT WASN'T THAT I DIDN'T GET *HORNY*. IT WAS THAT THERE DIDN'T SEEM MUCH *POINT*, IF IT WASN'T WITH SOMEONE I LOVED. LEANOR OR LISABET OR ANNE OR PEG...

YOU WAS THE FIRST WOMAN I'D BEEN WITH SINCE PEGGY DIED.

I *WISH* I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU ABOUT PEG. YOU'D'VE LIKED HER.

SHE DIED IN THE BLITZ. WE WERE TRAPPED IN A CELLAR. I HELD HER HAND, AS SHE STOPPED BREATHING...

AH, BUT THAT'S THE PAST, AND DONE WITH.

I THOUGHT WE'D HAVE LONGER.

IT NEVER GETS ANY EASIER. PEOPLE YOU LOVE NOT BEING THERE ANY MORE.

ANYWAY. THAT'S ALL THE *STUFF* I WANTED TO SAY.

I *MISS* YOU, AUDREY. I WISH I COULD REMEMBER WHAT YOU SMELLED LIKE.

HULLO YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I came to talk with you, Hob Gadling.

YEAH? WELL, LET'S GET OUT OF THIS BLOODY SNOW, THEN. THERE'S A PUB OVER THE ROAD.

THE FAITH AND HOPE CHARITY

WHAT'LL YOU HAVE TO DRINK?

Dark mead, if you please.

IN *THIS* DAY AND AGE? MIGHT AS WELL ASK FOR SACK, OR HOT-SPICED MADEIRA.

I'M GOING TO HAVE A SCOTCH. YOU *WANT* ONE?

Whatever you think fit.

AN INTERJECTION: AT THIS TIME, CERTAIN OTHER THINGS ARE HAPPENING.

FOR EXAMPLE, IT WAS THEN THAT DESTINY FOUND HIMSELF TRAILING GHOST-BOOKS IN HIS WAKE.

IT WAS SHORTLY AFTER THAT DESTINY CAUGHT SIGHT OF HIMSELF, WHILE WANDERING THE GARDEN THAT WAS HIS REALM.

THIS WAS NO SURPRISE TO HIM; IT WAS WRITTEN IN HIS BOOK THAT HE WOULD SEE HIMSELF, BUT STILL, IT GAVE HIM A CHILL TO SEE HIM THERE.

IT WAS THEN THAT DESIRE CLOSED OFF ITS REALM. THE SILVER HEART IN ITS SIBLINGS' GALLERIES WAS REPLACED BY A DARK VOID, SIGNIFYING DESIRE'S UNWILLINGNESS TO GIVE OR RECEIVE COMMUNI-CATION OF ANY KIND.

THE THRESHOLD, DESIRE'S HOME, A FLESH AND BLOOD CITADEL HIGHER THAN MOUNTAINS, CLOSED ITS EYES; AND DESIRE WANDERED THE PATHWAYS OF ITS BODY, IN THE DARKNESS, ALONE.

IT WAS THEN THAT DESPAIR, NOTICING THE MISSING HEART IN HER GALLERY, SAT MAKING SMALL NOISES IN THE MIRRORED MIST; HER RATS RAN OVER HER NAKED BODY, NIPPING AT HER FLESH TO ATTRACT HER ATTENTION.

IT WAS THEN THAT DELIRIUM NOTICED THAT SHE HAD ABSENT-MINDEDLY TRANSFORMED INTO A HUNDRED AND ELEVEN PERFECT, TINY MULTICOLORED FISH.

EACH FISH SANG A DIFFERENT SONG.

AND AS SHE PUT HERSELF BACK TOGETHER AGAIN, UNABLE FOR THE MOMENT TO REMEMBER WHETHER THE SILVER FLECKS WENT INTO THE BLUE EYE OR THE GREEN ONE, SHE DECIDED THAT A DOG WOULD BE A NICE THING TO HAVE.

AND THEN IT OCCURRED TO HER THAT THERE *HAD* BEEN A DOG AROUND AT SOME POINT, HADN'T THERE? A *NICE* DOGGIE...

AND SHE WENT OFF TO LOOK FOR IT, TRAILING OCCASIONAL FISH...

...WELL, IT'S HARD TO FORGET A DREAM THAT YOU WAKE UP FROM WITH HALF A BOTTLE OF HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD WINE YOU DIDN'T HAVE WHEN YOU WENT TO BED.

I DREAMED THAT YOU SAID YOU WERE OFF ON A JOURNEY, AND YOU MIGHT *MISS* OUR NEXT GET-TOGETHER.

Yes. The journey in question was not entirely without incident; however, it concluded in a more-or-less satisfactory manner.

I... I was sorry to hear of your loss, Hob.

S'OKAY. PEOPLE DIE. WELL, *MOST* OF THEM.

NO, IT'S *NOT* OKAY. IT *STINKS*. LOOK. YOU'RE... I DUNNO. MAGIC OR SOMETHING. *YOU'VE* GOT POWERS AND STUFF, HAVEN'T YOU?

COULDN'T YOU BRING HER *BACK*?

OR COULD YOU GO BACK IN TIME AND MAKE HER STOP AND LOOK BEFORE SHE RAN ACROSS THE ROAD? COULD YOU MAKE THE BLOKE DRIVING THE VAN IN A LITTLE LESS OF A HURRY?

No. I will not do these things.

WELL, WHAT *CAN* YOU DO, THEN?

I could make it that you dreamed of her each night. But you would not thank me for that.

NO, I WOULDN'T.

I REMEMBER ONCE I DREAMED THAT PEGGY DIED. AND I WOKE UP IN TEARS.

THEN I WOKE UP A BIT MORE, AND IT CAME TO ME IT WAS ONLY A SILLY DREAM.

AND I ROLLED OVER IN BED TO TELL PEG ABOUT IT, BUT SHE WASN'T THERE. AND THEN I WOKE UP PROPERLY, AND I REALIZED THAT SHE'D DIED A MONTH BEFORE.

DREAMS ARE TRICKY BUGGERS. YOU *CAN'T* TRUST THEM.

MAYBE YOU COULD TRACK DOWN THE BASTARD WHO WAS DRIVING THE VAN... JUST *HIT* HER AND DROVE OFF AS FAST AS HIS LITTLE WHEELS COULD CARRY HIM.

And what should I do with him, when I find him?

WELL, IN THE *OLD* DAYS WE'D BEGIN BY CUTTING OFF HIS *EARS* AND MAKING HIM EAT THEM. NOW?

I DON'T KNOW. SOMETHING TO TEACH HIM A LESSON.

I do not recommend revenge. It tends to have repercussions.

I KNOW.

I SUPPOSE I JUST WANT HIM TO KNOW WHO HE *KILLED*. WHAT AUDREY *MEANT* TO ME. WHY SHE WAS A GOOD PERSON. WHY SHE MADE ME *HAPPY* WHEN SHE *SMILED*.

Very well. It is done.

I should not have come here.

YOU'RE *GOING*? *ALREADY*?

LISTEN, I'M PLEASED YOU CAME, BUT...

ARE YOU IN TROUBLE?

NO.

THEN WHAT'S *WRONG*?

There is nothing wrong.

HOY!

LOOK. I SHOULDN'T SAY THIS. IT'S NOT MY PLACE--

I'VE BEEN AROUND A BIT. NOT AS LONG AS *YOU*, OBVIOUSLY. BUT IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE LEARNED TO PICK UP ON, IT'S THE SMELL OF DEATH. I MEAN, IT'S ALMOST LIKE A *REAL* SMELL.

YOU SNIFF IT ON A BLOKE AND TWO WEEKS LATER HE GETS HIS THROAT CUT IN AN ALLEY.

AND MATEY, YOU *STINK* OF IT. I WORRY. YOU TAKE *CARE* OF YOURSELF.

Thank you, Hob. I shall.

I HAVE TO BE STRONG FOR DANIEL.

I'M HIS MOTHER. I MUST BE STRONG.

WHEN I GET UNDER STRESS I HEAR THIS LITTLE VOICE IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD TELLING ME WHAT'S GOING ON. IT SOUNDS KIND OF LIKE A TV ANNOUNCER I HEARD WHEN I WAS A KID.

I'M HEARING IT NOW.

IT'S SAYING "I'M HEARING IT NOW." NO, ACTUALLY IT'S SAYING " IT'S SAYING 'I'M HEARING IT NOW...'"

IT'S LIKE STARING DOWN A SET OF INFINITE MIRRORS, TRYING TO CATCH MYSELF AT THE END. TRYING TO SEE MY SOUL.

I'M SHOPPING NOW. I'M HARDLY THINKING ABOUT DANIEL BEING GONE AT ALL. I'M BEING STRONG.

I'M BUYING MILK AND COOKIES AND COFFEE AND EGGS AND ORANGE JUICE.

3 Most Powerful Wo

MY FRIEND CARLA WANTED TO DO IT, BUT I SAID, NO--NO, I'LL DO IT.

I MEAN, YOU CAN'T JUST SIT THERE. YOU KNOW. IF YOU LET THESE THINGS GET TO YOU, YOU'D GO CRAZY.

I HAVE TO BE STRONG.

WHO SAW HIM DIE?
I, SAID THE FLY, WITH MY LITTLE EYE, I SAW HIM DIE.

THAT OLD MAN. I WONDER, IS HE THE ONE? HE WAS INTERESTED IN DANIEL. I'LL TALK TO THE POLICE. I'LL TELL THEM ABOUT HIM.

WHO'LL BE THE PARSON? I, SAID THE ROOK, WITH MY LITTLE BOOK, I'LL BE THE PARSON.

NOW I'M HOME AGAIN.

NOW ERIC'S COME OVER TO SEE HOW I'M DOING.

HE TELLS ME THAT OF COURSE THE JOB OFFER'S STILL OPEN, BUT HE'LL WAIT UNTIL I'M FEELING BETTER AND OF COURSE UNTIL THEY FIND DANIEL BEFORE PUSHING IT FURTHER.

HE TELLS ME THAT I'M BEING STRONG.

I TELL HIM I'M BEING STRONG FOR DANIEL.

HE ASKS ME IF I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT HAVING A MAN AROUND. HE TELLS ME I'M A VERY ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, AND THAT IF I NEED A SHOULDER TO CRY ON IN MY TIME OF TROUBLE, IF I NEED SOMEONE TO TURN TO, WELL, HE'D BE PROUD TO BE THERE FOR ME.

HE TOUCHES MY NECK AND I DON'T WANT HIM TOUCHING MY NECK SO I MOVE HIS ARM AWAY AND THERE'S A CRUNCHING NOISE, AND HE STARTS SAYING I'VE BROKEN HIS ARMBONE AND HE WINDS UP GOING OFF IN AN AMBULANCE.

THE BONES IN THE ARM ARE CALLED THE ULNA, THE RADIUS AND THE HUMERUS.

THEN CARLA COMES BACK AND WE HAVE A SORT OF DISCUSSION ABOUT THINGS, AND SHE DECIDES NOT TO STAY ANOTHER NIGHT AND I SAY THAT THAT'S FINE BECAUSE I CAN MANAGE ON MY OWN.

I DON'T GO TO SLEEP THAT NIGHT. I STAY UP ALL NIGHT AND WALK AROUND.

LAST NIGHT I GOT MAYBE AN HOUR OF SLEEP.

THERE WAS A --

(DREAM. MAYBE. A DREAM. A BAD DREAM. JUST A DREAM.)

I THINK ABOUT MY MOTHER, AND I THINK ABOUT MY SON, AND I START AT EVERY NOISE, AND EVERY TIME A CAR COMES DOWN THE STREET I'M SURE IT'S THE POLICE, BRINGING DANIEL BACK TO ME.

AND EVERY TIME THE CAR JUST KEEPS ON GOING AND I JUST WANT TO BREAK DOWN AND CRY BUT I DON'T BECAUSE I HAVE TO BE STRONG FOR DANIEL.

I MUST BE STRONG FOR DANIEL.

I WISH I SMOKED CIGARETTES. IT WOULD GIVE ME SOMETHING TO DO. I READ *PEOPLE* MAGAZINE TWICE ALREADY.

I'M NOT HUNGRY, THOUGH.

AND THERE'S NOTHING ON *TV* AT 4:00 AM BUT HOME SHOPPING CHANNELS AND *TWILIGHT ZONE* RERUNS AND I JUST DON'T HAVE THE ATTENTION SPAN SO I GO BACK TO THE WINDOW ONCE MORE AND WAIT.

AND FINALLY AFTER A NIGHT THAT LASTS FOREVER I WATCH THE PURPLE DARKNESS FADE INTO TWILIGHT AND THE EASTERN SKY SWIM WITH BLOOD AND SALMON.

RED SKY IN THE MORNING. SAILORS' WARNING...

AND THE BLOOD FADES INTO BLUE AND SOON IT'S STARTING TO GET HOT, AND IT'S A PRETTY, CLEAR DAY BECAUSE THE RAIN CLEANED THE SMOG OUT OF THE AIR ...

AND I READ SOMEWHERE THAT YOU CAN GO CRAZY IF YOU DON'T GET ANY SLEEP.

BUT I'M DOING FINE FEELING JUST FINE AND EVERYTHING'S CLEAR AS CRYSTAL.

I'M NOT EVEN HUNGRY.

AND THE ROAR OF CARS GETS LOUD AND STEADY ENOUGH THAT I CAN'T TELL THE SOUNDS OF INDIVIDUAL CARS ANYMORE SO IN THE END THE SOUND OF THE DOORBELL TAKES ME BY SURPRISE.

WATCH ME. THIS IS ME GOING TO THE DOOR, JUST LIKE I'VE DONE THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF TIMES IN THE PAST AND NONE OF THOSE TIMES WAS IMPORTANT I MEAN NOT *ONE* OF THOSE TIMES WAS IMPORTANT, I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER THEM AS INDIVIDUAL TIMES, WHO REMEMBERS WALKING TO THE DOOR...?

AND THEN I OPEN THE DOOR.

MA'AM?

DETECTIVE PINKERTON. DETECTIVE FELLOWES.

THAT'S RIGHT, MA'AM.

IS THERE... IS THERE *NEWS?*

I'M AFRAID SO, MA'AM. WE'D BETTER COME INSIDE.

NO. TELL ME. NOW.

DANIEL?

WE RECOVERED A *BODY*, MA'AM.

LAST NIGHT.

IT'S... IT'S KIND OF BADLY BURNED.

THERE'S A PHOTOGRAPH WE CAN SHOW YOU, MIZ HALL, BUT IT'S NOT VERY PLEASANT.

IT'S ID'D AS YOUR DANIEL'S BODY, MA'AM. FOOTPRINTS MATCH.

IT WAS FOUND BY A HIKER OUT IN THE MOJAVE DESERT. IT LOOKED LIKE HE MUST HAVE BEEN PLACED ON A FIRE.

WE'LL KNOW MORE WHEN THE FORENSICS PEOPLE GET THEIR REPORT IN.

POOR LITTLE TYKE.

SHOW ME THE PHOTOGRAPH.

SHOW ME THE PHOTOGRAPH.

I SEE.

I'D LIKE YOU BOTH TO *LEAVE* NOW, PLEASE.

BUT MA'AM...

BAM!

JUST DOING OUR JOB, MA'AM.

THIS IS ME WALKING INTO THE FAMILY ROOM.

THIS IS ME JUST STANDING HERE LISTENING TO THE VOICES IN MY HEAD. ONE OF THEM'S SAYING "THIS IS ME JUST STANDING HERE..."

AND THE OTHER ONE'S GOING "EEEEEEE..." IN ONE LONG CEASELESS SCREAM.

AND THE LAST ONE DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING AT ALL.

I CLOSE MY EYES TO TRY TO ESCAPE FROM THE IMAGE, TELLING MYSELF THAT IMAGES CAN LIE.

BUT OTHER PICTURES WAIT FOR ME.

YOU KILLED HECTOR. YOU DESTROYED OUR HOME.

YOU'VE RUINED MY LIFE.

YOU CALL THAT *NOTHING?*

Exactly. Nothing.

The child you have carried so long in dreams. That child is mine.

Take good care of it. One day I will come for it.

BUT, BUT, YOU *CAN'T*, MY *BABY...*

I will see you again, Hippolyta.

Until then, fare well.

Calm yourself, Hippolyta. You have nothing to fear from me

today.

I have come to see your son. That is all.

I HAVE TO BE STRONG.

YOU TAKE MY CHILD OVER MY DEAD BODY, YOU SPOOKY BASTARD.

OVER MY DEAD BODY.

I MUST BE STRONG.

AND IN MY HEAD A VOICE SAYS, YES, DEAR, YOU MUST.

AND IN MY HEAD ANOTHER VOICE IS MUTTERING OH THAT I WERE A MAN, OR THAT I HAD POWER TO EXECUTE MY APPREHENDED WISHES: I WOULD WHIP SOME WITH SCORPIONS...

AND A VOICE SAYS, YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MUST DO.

AND IT'S TRUE.

I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I MUST DO.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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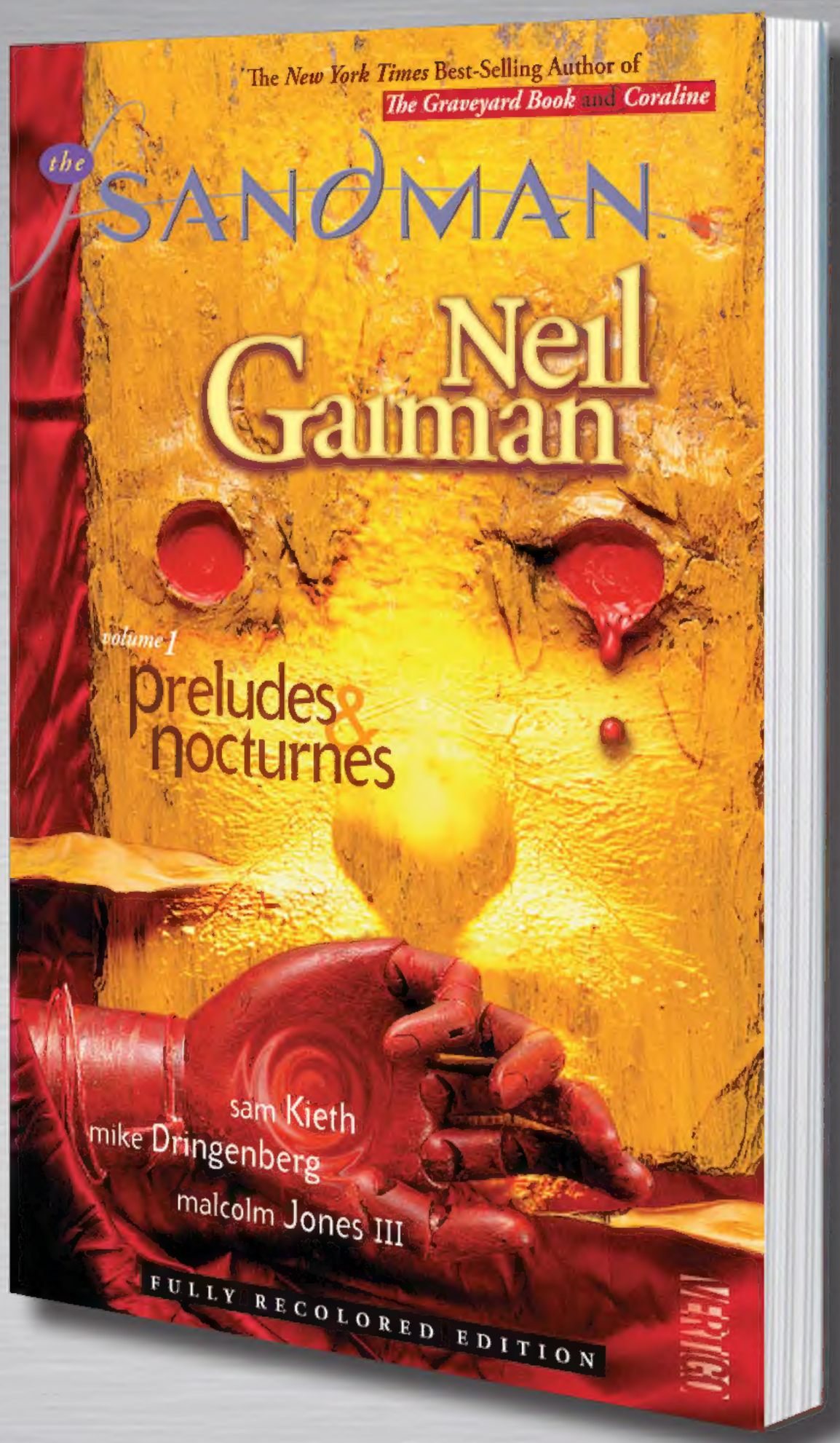

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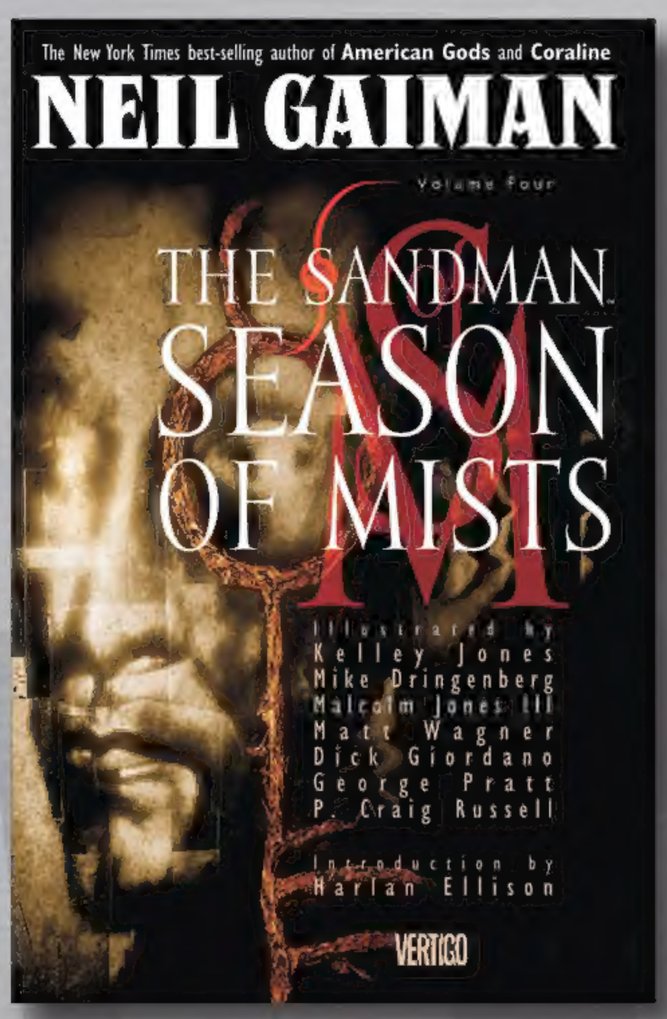

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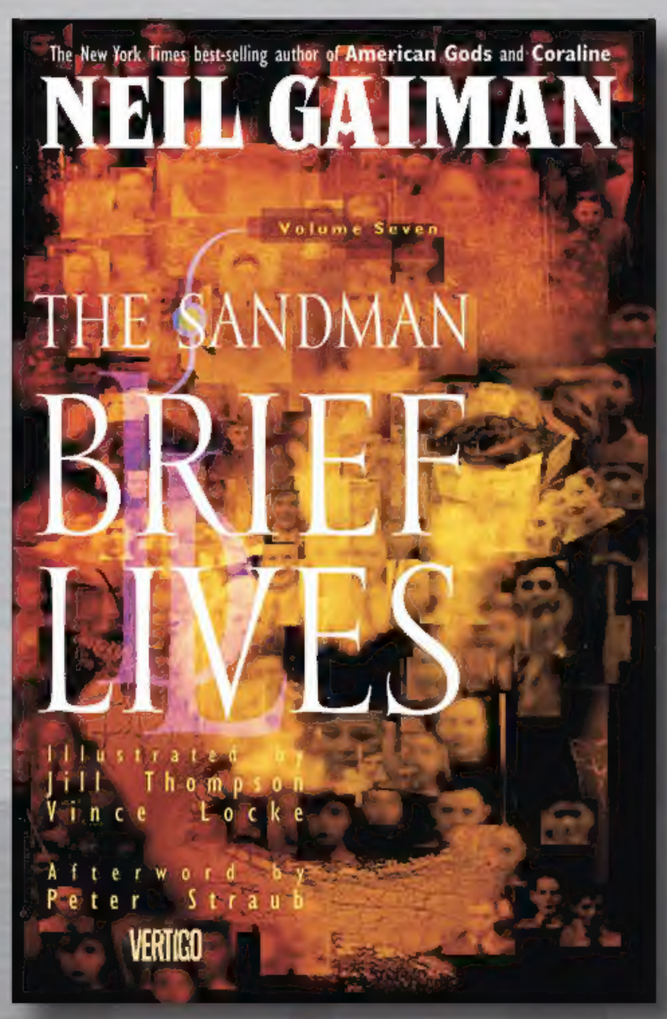

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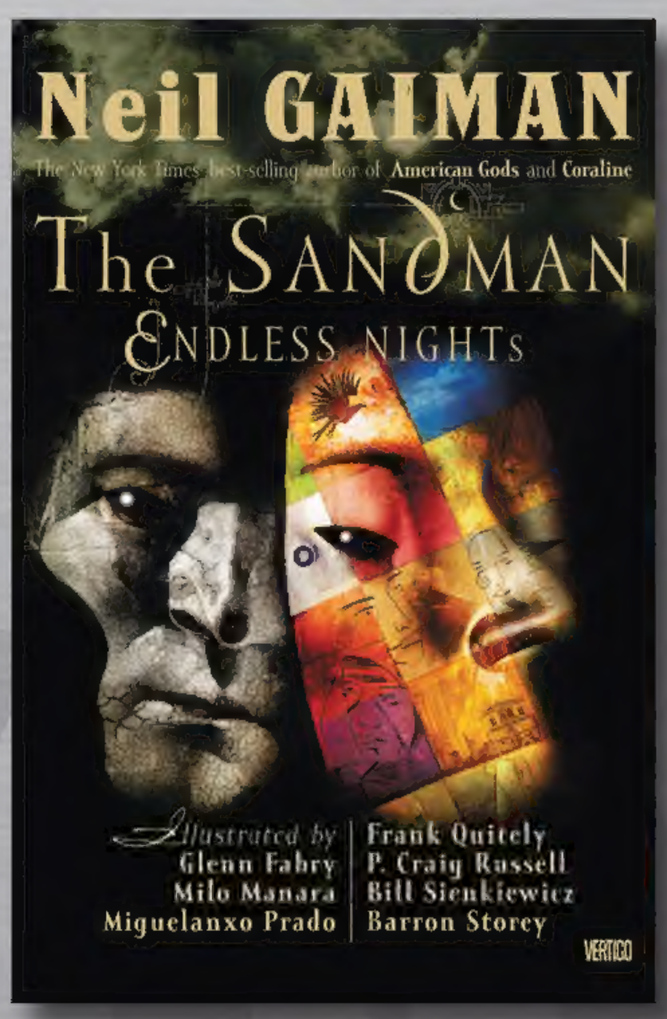

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